

Certified Access Specialist Program

CASp

CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook has been designed to guide you through the voluntary Certified Access Specialist application and examination process. In this handbook you will find information on how to become a Certified Access Specialist: the format, administration, and content of the certification examination process; sample examination questions and answers. As a candidate, it is your responsibility to read this handbook carefully and become familiar with the certification procedures and policies contained within. Should you have any questions, please contact the Division of the State Architect at:

DSA Headquarters
1102 Q Street, Suite 5100
Sacramento, CA 95811
Phone: (916) 323-2737
Fax: (916) 445-7658
Email: CASprogram@dgs.ca.gov
Website: [http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/](http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/Access/casp.htm)
[Access/casp.htm](http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov/Access/casp.htm)

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BACKGROUND

In 2003, Senate Bill 262 was passed and incorporated into Government Code 4459.5. Senate Bill 262 placed the following requirements on the Division of the State Architect (DSA): “the State Architect shall establish and publicize a program for voluntary certification by the state of any person who meets the specified criteria as a certified access specialist.” Furthermore, the State Architect is to make available to the public a list of certified access specialists who meet the specified criteria.

The purpose of the program is to further professionalize the field of disability access rights so that those who engage the services of design professionals, building officials, contractors, and architects may do so with the confidence that they understand accessibility issues.

With this in mind, what is a Certified Access Specialist? Certified Access Specialists are individuals who have met minimum criteria as determined by the State Architect, which may include testing on knowledge sufficient to review, inspect, or advocate universal design requirements and standards governing access to buildings for persons with disabilities.

AUTHORIZED FEES

Fees authorized as per Government Code Section 4459.8(b).

- 1) \$500.00 Application Fee, for processing the Candidate Eligibility Application; non-refundable.

- 2) \$800.00 Candidate Examination Fee, to cover administration of the Certification Examination; non-refundable.
- 3) \$300.00 Certification Fee, for continuing program administration over the initial three-year term of certification; non-refundable.
- 4) \$200.00 Verification of CEU's prior to Certification Renewal; non-refundable.
- 5) \$300.00 Recertification Renewal Fee, for program administration over an additional three-year term of certification; non-refundable.

EXPECTED COMPETENCY

The certification examination assesses a candidate's knowledge of the access requirements in the voluntary Certified Access Specialist Program's Accessibility.

Knowledge Base, which includes, but is not limited to, the following laws, codes and standards:

- 1) Public Services (Title II), Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities (Title III), and Miscellaneous Provisions (Title V) of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC Chapter 126), and promulgating regulations, the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).
- 2) Regulations for accessibility throughout all parts of the current edition of the C.C.R., Title 24, California Building Standards Code.

- 3) California Laws for accessibility in the Government Code, Health and Safety Code, and the Civil Code.
- 4) Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 (42 USC Sections 3601 – 3620) and promulgated technical guidance in the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines.
- 5) Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 USC Section 4151 et seq) and promulgating regulations, the Uniform Federal Access Standards (UFAS).
- 6) American National Standard for Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities (ANSI A117.1)
- 7) California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) A Voluntary Universal Design Local Ordinance (Chapter 726 of Statutes of 2002, adopted Section 17959 of the Health & Safety Code) most recent edition.
- 8) HCD New Home Universal Design Checklist (Section 17959.6 of the Health and Safety Code) the most recent edition.

EXAMINATION CONTENT CATEGORIES

The examination covers the following areas of competency:

- I) General Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA)
- II) Accessibility Codes and Standards
- III) Review of Accessible Features in Design and Construction Documents
- IV) Field Investigations

- V) Project Scoping and Accessibility Design Awareness

DETAILED CONTENT CATEGORIES

A detailed description of each CASp test area follows. The specific content areas should be interpreted broadly. When examples are provided in the following statements, they are not necessarily inclusive of all things that may be tested. All of the knowledge and skill statements are not assessed on a particular exam.

I. GENERAL KSA'S TO BE EMBODIED AS NECESSARY ACROSS TEST SECTIONS

Knowledge of:

- CASp Scope of Work.
- Architectural and construction concepts and terminology related to the design and construction of various building types, sufficient to interpret design and construction documents and to inspect subsequent construction.

II. ACCESSIBILITY CODES AND STANDARDS

Knowledge of:

- Provisions of Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and promulgated regulations and guidelines
- Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)
- Provisions of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS)

- Provisions of Sections 504 and 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Provisions of current California Code of Regulations, Title 24, related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of California Government Code Sections 11135–11139 related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of California Government Code Sections 4450–4459 related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of California Health and Safety Code Sections 19952–19959 related to accessibility requirements.
- Provisions of California Civil Code Sections 51–55.1 related to accessibility requirements for design, construction, and/or remediation projects.
- Current interpretative manuals, bulletins, and directives published by the State of California's Division of the State Architect (DSA) related to accessibility requirements.
- Basic knowledge of the underlying concepts related to Titles, I, IV, and V of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Regulatory jurisdictions responsible for the application, review, and approval of design and construction documents for permitting and approvals.
- Differing obligations, roles, and responsibilities of the parties involved in corrective action to

achieve conformance with accessibility requirements.

Skill to:

- Identify potential unreasonable hardship situations or technical infeasibility related to accessibility requirements through field investigation or other sources depicting actual site conditions.

III. REVIEW OF ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

Knowledge of:

- Organization of design and construction documents in order to locate all relevant contents such as drawings, graphics, schedules, plans, specifications, and details.
- Methods to delineate accessible features in design and construction documents, such as graphics, dimensions, and annotation.
- Drafting symbols, terms, and formatting conventions used in design and construction documents.

Skill to:

- Depict accessible elements in design and construction documents
- Detect nonconformance and/or omissions related to accessibility requirements in design and construction documents.
- Identify discrepancies between project/permit application and design and construction documents.

- Check and verify coordination of accessible elements throughout all relevant design and construction documents.
- Analyze site horizontal and vertical elevation data to evaluate conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.
- Analyze floor plan information to determine dimensions, distances, interior areas used to evaluate conformance with applicable access requirements.
- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements, recognizing their combined impact on conformance.

IV. FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Skill to:

- Identify accessible elements and determine conformance with applicable accessibility requirements, through field investigations.
- Conduct field investigations and/or evaluate other sources of data depicting actual site conditions to evaluate conformance with accessibility requirements and in comparison to construction documents.
- Assess the operational characteristics of facilities, buildings, and the site to identify viable patterns of use.
- Analyze site horizontal and vertical elevation data to evaluate conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.

- Analyze floor plan information to determine dimensions, distances, interior areas used to evaluate conformance with applicable access requirements.
- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements, recognizing their combined impact on conformance.

V. PROJECT SCOPING AND ACCESSIBILITY DESIGN AWARENESS

Knowledge of:

- Potential liability and exposure to the client when designing and/or recommending alternative solutions to mitigate accessibility deficiencies.
- Disability-related functional limitations and related accessibility needs to provide appropriate design solutions and/or determine mitigation efforts that conform with accessibility requirements.
- Factors affecting the scope and applicability of accessibility requirements, including permit application date(s), construction date(s), project type and scope, occupancy, funding source(s), and programmed use of space.
- Principles and application of Universal Design to promote facility, building, and space design without accessibility barriers and meeting the needs of the greatest number of users.
- Design and product resources for specific disability-related

functional limitations to provide informed consultation and effective methods to meet client needs.

- Methods for substantiating equivalent facilitation, and related evaluation methods to analyze, describe, and document code conformance, technical infeasibility, and unreasonable hardship.
- The practical design of buildings and space that endorse Universal Design principles.

Skill to:

- Analyze site horizontal and vertical elevation data to evaluate conformance with applicable accessibility requirements.
- Analyze floor plan information to determine dimensions, distances, interior areas used to evaluate conformance with applicable access requirements.
- Analyze and evaluate interdependent, and often contradictory, accessibility requirements, recognizing their combined impact on conformance
- Develop priorities of corrective action based on cited accessibility requirements.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION PROCESS

The test proctor will read instructions prior to each examination. Helpful information is given during the proctor's instructions so listen carefully. Ask questions if there is something you do not understand about the procedure, but be aware that the proctor cannot answer questions about test content or interpret words. You may not bring an interpreter to the test.

The examination is a closed-book test. The examination will be offered twice on the scheduled day at each location. Morning or afternoon sessions will be available.

Watch the time carefully during the test, as the examination may not exceed 2.5 hours. The time is set so that the majority of candidates will finish the test. The proctor will periodically announce the remaining time.

Candidates are asked to leave personal items* in their cars or at home. All examination materials needed, including pencils, will be provided.

*Personal items, including cameras, purses, briefcases, backpacks, fanny packs, study materials, beepers, pagers, cellular telephones, PDAs, etc., are **not** permitted in the testing room. CPS will not monitor any personal items left outside the testing room. DSA/CASp Program will **not** be responsible for any items not permitted into the testing room.

EXAMINATION PROTOCOL

Standard testing practices are employed to ensure the security and fairness of this examination.

Rosters of registered examinees are provided to the Chief Proctor at the test site. Candidates will present their exam site admission forms and government issued identification bearing a signature and photograph. Proctors check the resemblance to the photograph and compare that person's signature when they sign the roster to prevent impersonation and ensure each examination is administered in a fair and secure manner. Only registered examinees with proper identification—including the exam site admission form issued by DSA—will be allowed to enter the test site.

Candidates will be required to bring their exam site admission form and to present at least one office photo bearing identification at the check-in desk. Only the following forms of identification will be accepted:

- a) current state issued driver's license or state-issued identification card
- b) current U.S. or foreign issued passport
- c) military identification card issued within the last five years

Proctors shall admit each eligible examinee into the test site, provided the individual arrives prior to the official time of the test administration. Based on the pace of admissions processing, the Chief Proctor shall decide when the doors of the examination room will close. Late arriving examinees will be

considered ineligible and not be admitted after the doors are closed. Visitors will not be allowed to enter the testing room at any time, unless specifically called in for the arrangements for a special accommodation.

Once the doors are closed, an examinee count will be conducted to assure the proper number of test booklets is distributed. Test booklets will be distributed by hand to each examinee. Unused test booklets will be kept available in a secure place, to be distributed as needed in case of defect. A defective test booklet will be replaced with another test booklet of exactly the same type. Any replacements will be noted on the Proctor's Report.

At the end of each test session, the proctors will collect all test booklets, and any other test materials. Examinees finishing early must turn in all materials before leaving the testing room. Examinees finishing during the final scheduled fifteen minutes of the exam will not be dismissed until all test materials have been collected and inventoried.

AFTER THE EXAMINATION

Passing Score Information:

The pass point for the CASp examination is not arbitrary. A criterion-referenced approach (e.g., modified Angoff method) is the recommended method for setting the pass point for licensure and certification exams. The modified Angoff method is the most commonly used method and involves setting the pass point on the basis of minimum standards for proficient

practice (i.e., job requirements) rather than relative candidate performance (e.g., grading on the curve). Subject matter experts in the field were consulted throughout the process to ensure a fair and accurate pass point. Standards were consistently applied to all forms of the exam to ensure a fair pass point for all candidate groups.

Notification of Scores:

Candidates will receive their scores by mail within 4 to 6 weeks of the examination.

Receiving Certification:

Candidates who successfully pass the examination may request a certificate by mail following receipt of examination scores. Candidates who passed the examination and paid the certification fee can expect to have their names listed in the Certified Access Specialist List within one month of notification.

Retaking the Examination:

Candidates who do not pass the examination will have the opportunity to retake the examination an unlimited number of times until they pass. However, candidates must still pay the fee for each examination and register within examination deadlines.

Challenging Your Examination Scores:

Appeals concerning examination scores must be submitted in writing within 30 days after receiving the score by mail.

Written appeals must be submitted to:

**Division of the State Architect
Attn: CASp Exam Challenges
1102 Q Street, Suite 5100
Sacramento, CA 95811**

Appeals concerning the validity of examination questions must be addressed in writing immediately following the examination. Once all candidates have turned in their examinations, proctoring staff will distribute a form containing general questions as well as requesting candidates to list examination questions that they thought were confusing and inadequately worded.

Candidates may appeal the validity of examination questions only at this time. Proctoring staff will assemble all responses from candidates for further analysis.

GENERAL TEST PREPARATION INFORMATION

Following is information to help you study for the written examination for certification as an Access Specialist:

- Do some work every day in preparation for the examination. Budget your time; set aside a definite study period for each day. Begin concentrating as soon as you sit down to study.
- Study by yourself and with others to encourage an exchange of ideas. Your study should focus on content areas listed in this study guide. It is not advisable for candidates to memorize large groups of test questions for the registration test process. A large computerized item bank

has been created to generate different test forms on a regular basis.

- The focus of your study should be on knowledge and skills relevant to an access specialist.
- Develop your own illustrations and examples to check your understanding of a topic. Make sure you fully understand the basic terms for each content area.
- Create your own glossary of terms and look up any new words in a reference book.
- The test will contain items at various levels of cognitive ability. Consequently, it is important to be able to understand, apply, and analyze the material as you would on the job. Although all questions will be in a multiple-choice format, the items will be presented in a number of forms. For example, a written scenario may be followed by a series of three or four questions.
- Some test takers are anxious about taking tests and need to simulate the test taking situation. If this is true for you, you may want to give yourself actual practice in a quiet, distraction-free environment.

GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR TAKING WRITTEN TESTS

The basic format for this test is the multiple-choice format with four distinct choices. Here are some general hints for taking this type of test:

- Most importantly, the test is designed to have only one answer that is best from among the four choices given.
- Your attitude about the test process can make a difference. Approach the test confidently. Arrive in plenty of time for the test so you do not feel rushed.
- Be certain that you understand how to correctly use the computer scannable answer sheet. Make sure you are careful to make clean erasures on your answer sheet and to only mark one correct answer per test item.
- Read all directions carefully, twice if necessary.
- Your score on this test will be based only on the number of correct choices you make (the number of times you select the best choice from the four given). All test items are equally weighted even though there are different weights for specific program areas. You may guess on questions you are not sure of as you go through the test. Mark them in your booklet for further consideration if you have time after you finish the entire test. Remember, this test does not penalize you for incorrect answers or guessing.
- Read each question carefully, making sure that you understand it before you answer. Reread it if necessary, but do not waste time on questions that seem too unfamiliar or difficult. Interpret words according to their generally accepted meanings. Rephrase or underline key words in difficult questions. No question is intended to be a “trick” or “catch” question.
- Answer the easy questions first; postpone more difficult questions until later, making an initial guess in case you do not have enough time to go back to it.
- Check your answers if you do have time; however, remember that often your first response is correct.
- If you find a question you believe may be incorrect, you can comment on the calculation sheet provided. Include why you believe the question may be incorrect. This must be done during the allotted time for each examination book. Subject matter experts and occupational testing specialists will carefully review all comments. Try to focus on doing well on many items on the test rather than getting bogged down on “making your case” on just one item that counts as one point. Extensive quality control measures were used to ensure a flawless test, including panel reviews by qualified subject matter experts in your field, in addition to state-of-the-art computerized scoring and item analysis techniques.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Non-discrimination Policy:

DSA does not discriminate against any applicant on the basis of race, color, creed, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, parental status, ancestry, sexual orientation, discharge status, or

source of income. All candidates will be evaluated solely by the published criteria as established by this Handbook.

attendees will have an opportunity to meet local disability organizations and their leaders.

Confidentiality Policy:

DSA has adopted policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality of all candidates. Staff will not discuss pending applications and scores with anyone but the applicant.

AVAILABLE TRAINING AND SEMINAR

The resources listed below, although not mandated by this program, are provided to use as a resource for further understanding about the many aspects of accessibility.

International Code Council:
<http://www.iccsafe.org/training/campus/>

California Foundation for Independent Living Centers:
<http://www.cfilc.org/site/>

DSA Academy:
<http://www.dsa.dgs.ca.gov>.

Future Disabilities Awareness Seminar:

DSA proposes to provide, with assistance from CFILC, a one-day disability awareness seminar to assure that all interested participants share a common understanding of key aspects of any number of disabling conditions. One objective of the seminar is to introduce practical considerations in terms of common courtesy and established conventions and protocol involving people with disabilities. We are planning to have these seminars available across the state so that

APPENDIX 'A'

Sample Exam Questions:

- 1) What is the maximum allowable floor slope within an accessible shower with two floor drains?
 - a) 0.5%
 - b) 1%
 - c) 2%
 - d) 3%
- 2) In a multiple-accommodation toilet room with eight (8) stalls, what is the minimum number of stalls that must have out-swinging doors?
 - a) 0
 - b) 1
 - c) 2
 - d) 8
- 3) What law applies to a housing project entirely owned and funded by the State of California?
 - a) Fair Housing Act
 - b) International Building Code
 - c) Architectural Barriers Act
 - d) Housing and Urban Development
- 4) The California Association of Cheese Makers plans to open a public relations office in Washington D.C. The planned tenant improvement triggers compliance with what regulation?
 - a) Title III of the ADA
 - b) Title II of the ADA
 - c) HUD fair housing
 - d) ANSI 117.9
- 5) Sixteen employees working in a privately funded, city-operated museum are protected under which Federal law?
 - a) Title I of the ADA
 - b) Title II of the ADA
 - c) Title III of the ADA
 - d) Title IV of the ADA
- 6) In an alteration project of a classroom building that includes the installation of a fire alarm system, where would visual alarm devices be required?
 - a) Within all common use areas of the building.
 - b) In custodial storage areas of the building.
 - c) Mechanical equipment areas of the building.
 - d) Single occupancy office areas used only by employees as work areas.

- 7) The California Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning a new pedestrian and bicycle overpass crossing Highway 101. The only available staging area for the construction is occupied by a National Guard office and maintenance building on federally owned land. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has allowed the DOT to demolish the building, use the site as a staging area, and rebuild a new office and maintenance building on behalf of the DOD at the same location after the construction of the overpass bridge is complete. Which of the following regulations applies to the new construction of the building?
- a) California Building Code
 - b) ANSI A117.1
 - c) Armed Forces Accessibility Standards.
 - d) UFAS
- 8) What do the required identification symbols on restroom doors represent?
- a) universal accessible use
 - b) men, women or unisex use
 - c) child assistance use
 - d) universal family use
- 9) A ramp is defined as any slope in the accessible route that exceeds what ratio?
- a) 1:10
 - b) 1:12
 - c) 1:15
 - d) 1:20
- 10) Where shall the grooved border be placed at all curb ramps, regardless of slope?
- a) the level surface of the sidewalk
 - b) the bottom of the curb ramp run
 - c) between the curb ramp run and the adjoining side flares
 - d) within the ramp run
- 11) The cross slope of a curb cut at a median shall not exceed which of the following?
- a) 1:2
 - b) 1:12
 - c) 1:20
 - d) 1:50
- 12) The top gripping surface of a ramp handrail must be within what height range vertically above the ramp level?
- a) 30" to 34"
 - b) 34" to 38"
 - c) 36" to 42"
 - d) 38" to 42"
- 13) What raised character is also provided on the door jamb at grade level of elevators?
- a) a bell symbol
 - b) a stop sign symbol
 - c) a five-pointed star symbol
 - d) an international accessibility symbol

14) What is the maximum opening for a grate in an accessible shower?

- a) 1/8 inch
- b) 1/4 inch
- c) 1/2 inch
- d) 3/4 inch

15) According to ADAAG, within an office space with a 10 ft. ceiling height, what is the maximum height AFF for mounting visual alarm signal appliances?

- a) 72 inches
- b) 80 inches
- c) 114 inches
- d) 120 inches

16) What is the main purpose for installing a swimming pool lift?

- a) Reduces employee injury
- b) The facility can get a tax break for upgrading its accessibility features.
- c) The lifeguard will not be distracted from watching swimmers when assisting a disabled individual in and out of the pool from watching swimmers when assisting a disabled individual in and out of the pool.
- d) A person with a disability is capable of unassisted operation in entering or exiting the pool.

ANSWER KEY (with noted code reference)

- 1) c (CBC 1115B.4.4.7)
- 2) b (CBC 1115B.3.1, Item 5)
- 3) a (CFR - Fair Housing Act)
- 4) a (CFR – Americans with Disabilities Act)
- 5) a (CFR – Americans with Disabilities Act)
- 6) a (CBC 907.9.1.1)
- 7) d
- 8) b (CBC 1115B.6)
- 9) d (CBC 1133B.5.1)
- 10)a (CBC 1127B.5, Item 6)
- 11)d (ADAAG 4.3.7)
- 12)b (CBC 1133B.5.5.1)
- 13)c (CBC 1116B.1.14)
- 14)b (CBC 1115B.4.4.7)
- 15)b (ADAAG 4.28.3(6))
- 16)d (CBC 1104B.4.3, Item 4)